

Narrator:

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Allegations of fraud in Afghanistan's August 20 presidential and provincial council elections need "a rigorous vetting," according to the U.S. State Department. Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters September 8 that it is very important that the elections are seen as legitimate in the eyes of the Afghan people and the international community. He urged Afghan voters and political leaders to show patience as their country's independent election institutions deal with the fraud complaints.

The counting of votes is now drawing to a conclusion. Afghanistan's Independent Electoral Commission has announced preliminary results for 91.6 percent of the country's polling stations. Results from about 600 other polling stations are being held as investigations continue. Afghanistan's Election Complaints Commission, backed by the United Nations, has alleged "clear and convincing evidence of fraud" in a number of polling places.

The United States has maintained throughout the elections process that the results need to be credible and reflect the will of the Afghan people. So far the process is working, according to Kelly. The Afghan institutions' serious response to fraud allegations is an important step in maintaining the legitimacy of the electoral process. The process needs to be given a chance to work itself out.

Despite the fraud allegations, Afghanistan's authorities have demonstrated that they can conduct an election where millions of Afghan citizens were able to freely express their will, Kelly said. The investigations are being carried out by structures put in place and run by the Afghan authorities.

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the world's largest economies have agreed that until there is a sustained economic recovery led by the private sector, stimulus measures taken earlier this year will remain in effect. U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said September 5 at a G20 ministers meeting in London that the financial system is showing signs of repair and growth is now under way.

The meeting was held to assess where the global economy is now and where it is headed as officials prepare for the Group of 20 Summit to be held September 24–25 in Pittsburgh. The ministers met to set the agenda for the summit and to determine what actions may be needed in tandem with stimulus measures — now estimated at \$5 trillion — pushed through earlier this year as the global economy experienced its deepest global recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Geithner told the ministers that the classic errors of economic policy should not be repeated. During crises, governments tend to act too late with too little force, and then remove stimulus measures too early, Geithner said. At the same time, a more secure and safe international financial system should be established. Stronger regulation on risk taking, oversight of key institutions and financial markets, and reform of securities markets are part of this effort.

Ministers agreed to develop by the end of next year stronger capital requirements for banks and more demanding standards for certain financial institutions.. Another measure that will be further refined for the G20 Summit is a change to compensation and bonus practices for commercial banks. Many nations regard current compensation practices as excessive.

Drawing from his own life experiences, President Obama urged America's schoolchildren to take responsibility for their education and take advantage of the opportunities that an education offers. Along with issues such as health care and energy, improving education is among the Obama administration's top priorities.

On September 8th, the president gave a speech directly to America's students welcoming them back to school. He emphasized that students have a responsibility to themselves to achieve a high level of education.

Most public high schools and elementary schools in the United States have reopened after summer vacation. One of the challenges facing America is that every year 1.2 million students in city schools, rural schools and suburban communities drop out, according to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Duncan said that the president believed it was critically important to speak directly to America's students to attempt to improve their academic performance.

Obama had this to say to students about responsibility:

President Obama:

Now, I've given a lot of speeches about education. And I've talked about responsibility a lot.

I've talked about teachers' responsibility for inspiring students and pushing you to learn.

I've talked about your parents' responsibility for making sure you stay on track, and you get your homework done, and don't spend every waking hour in front of the TV or with the Xbox.

I've talked a lot about your government's responsibility for setting high standards, and supporting teachers and principals, and turning around schools that aren't working, where students aren't getting the opportunities that they deserve.

But at the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, the best schools in the world -- and none of it will make a difference, none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities, unless you show up to those schools, unless you pay attention to those teachers, unless you listen to your parents and grandparents and other adults and put in the hard work it takes to succeed. That's what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education.

I want to start with the responsibility you have to yourself. Every single one of you has something that you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That's the opportunity an education can provide.

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Obama called on students across the country to set their own goals for their education, no matter how great or how small, and do everything possible to meet them. He told students that people succeed because they understand they cannot let failure define them.

President Obama:

No one's born being good at all things. You become good at things through hard work. You're not a varsity athlete the first time you play a new sport. You don't hit every note the first time you sing a song. You've got to practice. The same principle applies to your schoolwork. You might have to do a math problem a few times before you get it right. You might have to read something a few times before you understand it. You definitely have to do a few drafts of a paper before it's good enough to hand in.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength because it shows you have the courage to admit when you don't know something, and that then allows you to learn something new. So find an adult that you trust -- a parent, a grandparent or teacher, a coach or a counselor -- and ask them to help you stay on track to meet your goals.

And even when you're struggling, even when you're discouraged, and you feel like other people have given up on you, don't ever give up on yourself, because when you give up on yourself, you give up on your country.

The story of America isn't about people who quit when things got tough. It's about people who kept going, who tried harder, who loved their country too much to do anything less than their best.

It's the story of students who sat where you sit 250 years ago, and went on to wage a revolution and they founded this nation. Young people. Students who sat where you sit 75 years ago who overcame a Depression and won a world war; who fought for civil rights and put a man on the moon. Students who sat where you sit 20 years ago who founded Google and Twitter and Facebook and changed the way we communicate with each other.

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